

ART IN AMERICA *AND ELSEWHERE*
AN ILLUSTRATED BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE
VOLUME XV • NUMBER IV • JUNE 1927



BYZANTINE IVORY CASKETS IN AMERICAN
MUSEUMS

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INTEREST in East Christian Ivories and particularly in the fine and rare ivory coffers of the so-called Second Golden Age of Byzantine Art (tenth to twelfth century) has grown encouragingly in this country during the last few years, if one may judge by the examples on exhibit in American museums. Out of the small number of Byzantine Coffers extant,¹ we know of at least five in American museums. Three of these, of which two belong respectively to the Hellenistic and the Syrian-Hellenistic Schools, are in the Morgan Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; one, of the Syrian-Hellenistic group, is in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts and one of the Christian type, the famous Bethune "Adam and Eve" coffer is in the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Many problems connected with East Christian Ivories in general, thanks to the researches and labor of such scholars as Graeven, Strzygowski, Wulff, Dalton and others, have been solved, but there still re-

¹ Graeven lists fifty ivory caskets of the Veroli or Hellenistic type.

main certain problems of the ivory coffer, which are open to argument and conjecture until more specific data is obtained. Most of these are problems of provenance, date, models from which subject motives are drawn, and problems of modification of the antique by oriental influences.

The larger coffers are made in two shapes, the square box and the long rectangular box. The covers are either flat or pyramidable, hinged or sliding. The antecedents seem to have been the bone and silver Jewel Caskets of the Roman Empire.² The use of these caskets in the Christian East were probably receptacles for personal treasures, or reliquaries, the latter used by the church in which case they contained the ashes of saints or the sacred relics of the clergy. To them, likely would belong the caskets of the very small Christian group, dating in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, following the Inconoclastic decrees; to the former, belong the Syrian-Hellenistic and the Alexandrian or Hellenistic group of which the earliest is attributed to the ninth century. To the Hellenistic group belong the greater number of the caskets, the supreme example being the famous Veroli casket whose relief carvings have never been surpassed, from the collection of the Cathedral of Veroli, Italy, and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.³ But the finest group in any one place according to O. M. Dalton is that in the Pierpont Morgan collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In this group two types are represented, the Hellenistic, with carving inspired by Greek Culture, and the Syrian-Hellenistic, with carving inspired by both the Oriental and the Greek. There is also a panel of the third or Christian type in the same collection. In the Syrian-Hellenistic group, the finest example in this country is the Hoentschel Casket now in the Morgan Wing of the Metropolitan Museum and the second finest is in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Both caskets are attributed to the tenth or eleventh centuries. The Detroit Coffer is long and rectangular shaped with a sliding cover. The side panels set between the characteristic, encircled rosette and vine borders are carved in low flat relief with subjects inspired by the orient, representing mythological animals and wild beasts, while the cover represents a Bacchanal of Hellenistic origin. Figure 1 shows an evenly balanced sequence of animals paired in three groups: the center, fronting tigers, "before a tree of life motif,"

² O. M. Dalton: *Byzantine Art and Archeology*, page 216.

³ O. M. Dalton: *East Christian Art*, page 213.

balanced by fronting griffons and a wolf or dog on the right attacking presumably a gazelle. The corresponding side represents three groups of animals carved in pairs; the first or center group appears to represent a dog or wolf attacking a gazelle; the second to the left, fronting griffons; the third at the right, peacocks with a single gazelle carved so that the continuity of line is retained with the fronting peacocks. The dog and wolf are clearly distinguishable in the Hoentschal casket in the Morgan collection, but there is added a rabbit, leopard, lions and two mythological animals.

The sliding covers of both caskets are of Hellenistic origin, possibly incidents from the Hippodrome games at Constantinople. The cover of the Detroit coffer represents a bacchanal. Figure 2 shows three pairs of nude figures, two of them apparently female who sway across the panel in the dance. Long scarfs are caught about the ankles of the central figures; the woman at the left end of the panel holds two tambourines; one of the men of the center group holds a tambourine, the other an oliphant, or curved horn, which he is blowing; the third group holds presumably a syrinx or pipe and a scarf. The bacchanal is not treated with the same fineness of carving as the long side panels, and we believe that they have been carved by different hands. In either case, it is clear that the Oriental carver is not at home in attempting the Greek theme. In general, in all the caskets, but more particularly in the Syrian types, there is little structural correspondence between the anatomy and the action represented. The three other well-known caskets of this type, with which the Detroit example may be compared, are the Hoentschal casket in New York, the Rhodes Hawkins' casket in the British Museum and the former Spitzer casket now in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, England. In the Hoentschal example the compromise is more successful, and the cover of the casket appears to be carved by the same hand which carved the side panels. Here, the cover panel is separated into two scenes representing nine figures. The left panel illustrates presumably a sword dance, one of the pastimes of the Hippodrome. The seated figure upon the box or turf, with his hand at his head, may be a participant who has just completed the dance and is resting, recovering from a blow struck him. The other four figures are engaged in the dance. The second panel illustrates clearly a musical episode or contest conducted by a leader who sits upon a bench and beats time with a baton. The three musicians play respectively the pipe, tambourine and syrinx. They,

too, are engaged in dance. A characteristic of the figure carving in the caskets of the Syrian group are the regular tight curls of the head and an indifference to form. The figures are much flattened and are represented in partial profile, exhibiting the body frontally from the waist to the shoulder, while the legs and head are carved in profile. According to Dalton these diminutive nudes are borrowed from the Roman silversmiths whose putti in the silver vessels, as seen in the Roman treasury at Boscoreale, Bernay and Pompeii, ornamented together with animals suggests the origin for those used in the Byzantine caskets.⁴ The evidence which Dalton believes strongest respecting the origin of this influence is the profile heads resembling coin types inserted in the rosette border of the famous Veroli casket. Coins bearing Imperial effigies and inlaid in the borders of silver dishes were among silversmiths a common method of Graeco-Roman decoration.

The side panels of the Hoentschal casket, although similar in subject to the Detroit casket, are treated differently in their composition. In the Detroit ivory the six beasts are carved in one long panel, the outline of a pair of animals leading by sequence to the next pair, so that the eye is kept moving back and forth across the panel. This, apparently is a variant of the usual scheme, as shown by the Hoentschal example where the grouping of the animals are separated by small compartment panels. In the first panel, a dog pursues a hare; in the second a wolf attacks a deer; in the third a hare attempts escape from two dogs. (Fig. 3.) The opposite side shows in the first panel a dog barking at a leopard; in the second facing lions and in the third two facing mythological animals. The subjects are treated with sprightly and even humorous interest. Although there is little understanding of anatomical structure, there is a fine, crisp, sharp, outline carving, representing the subject directly and with considerable realistic and dramatic interest, as is shown by the activity of the beasts and the abrupt change of scene from one panel to another. The stylistic treatment with its flattened relief and crisp outline has its origin back in the fourth century when the Hellenistic style underwent gradual modification in its contact with Coptic Art.⁵ The influence of the Copts in the time of Constantine extended throughout the Greek centers of the Mediterranean, as evidenced by the stone sculptures, and particularly by the ivory carving conveyed in the geometrical planned design and the formal deco-

⁴ O. M. Dalton: *Byzantine Art and Archeology*, page 216.

⁵ O. M. Dalton: *East Christian Art*, pages 168 and 169.



FIGS. 1 AND 2. SYRIAN-HELLENISTIC IVORY CASKET
The Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, Mich.

FIG. 3. THE HOENTSCHEL-MORGAN CASKET
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City





FIGS. 5 AND 6. THE BETHUNE CASKET
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio

FIG. 4. THE HOENTSCHEL-MORGAN CASKET
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City



ration. Human figures lost their organic structure, becoming flattened in both sacred and Hellenistic subjects of the sixth century to conform with the new style. The Syrian illuminators of manuscripts, with their Oriental inheritance, only served to accentuate the change.⁶ In sculpture of definitely Christian character the same change took place. The sarcophagi at Ravenna, where many workers were imported from the East to carve in stone, illustrates clearly the gradual modification of Christian subjects under Syrian influence.

The greater number of the known, fifty, ivory caskets belong, as stated above, to the Hellenistic group. A well-known and distinguished example of this group is the Hellenistic casket in the Morgan collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. From the definiteness of the Greek tradition and the conspicuous absence of Oriental motifs, excepting the characteristic rosette and vine border, one would like to suggest for this ivory, an Alexandrian origin. There is also the possibility that the casket was made at Constantinople in the Alexandrian style. When the iconoclastic disturbances were over, Constantinople, now strongly Hellenized, under the Macedonian dynasty of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and beginning a "Neo-classical" period, favored work copied or inspired by classical models.⁷ Hence, workers in Alexandria were found practicing at Constantinople. There is, therefore, a reasonable doubt on stylistic evidence unless it is supported by more conclusive data concerning the exact provenance of the caskets in Alexandrian style.

The Morgan casket exhibits the Alexandrian style both in its subject motive and its refined, classic manner of execution. Upon the cover are three panels with mounted horsemen, two of them carrying lances, one a javelin held in position of attack. (Fig. 4.) One of the figures is helmeted. The subject appears to represent a jousting scene. A small but salient point is the fact that the riders wear stirrups. This is good evidence for dating the casket in the tenth or eleventh century, as stirrups were not generally known in Europe until the seventh century, a fact brought forward by Dalton, who, we believe, is the first to have remarked and used this evidence to support a later dating than some would give.⁸ The point is illustrated by the casket in the Museo Archeologico at Cividale, one of the earliest caskets known, dating likely in the eighth or ninth century.

⁶ O. M. Dalton: *Byzantine Art and Archeology*, page 466.

⁷ O. M. Dalton: *East Christian Art*, page 46.

⁸ O. M. Dalton: *Byzantine Art and Archeology*, page 218.

The five side panels of the Morgan example represent three warriors, possibly gladiators, two of them carrying shields and holding up-lifted swords, while one carries a javelin. The other panel appears to represent a long-distance runner. The end panel, showing a seated figure, we believe to represent an emperor, witnessing the joust and gladiatorial contests. The figure which is seated upon a throne, wears a coat of mail across his breast and holds a staff as insignia of office. The high boots would appear to be "imperial," while the hand is up-lifted as though opening the games. The relief is not nearly so flattened as the Syrian examples. The carving is refined, clearly cut, and of a lapiderian quality and technique. The forms are far more articulated than the Hellenistic covers of the Syrian boxes, and yet the frontality of the chests, together with the legs and head in profile, is as apparent here as in the Oriental group.

The border of the casket contains interesting variations worth noting. A bead and dart moulding encloses and separates the panel carving from the outer border ornamented with one of the finest of the characteristic encircled rosette and vine motifs, with the one exception of the beautiful and rich border of the Cleveland example. The exterior border in its composition and subtleties is a variant from the usual form owing to the five distinct types of floral motifs carved on a background of parallel lines. The fifth motif, which is a many-petaled rosette, is varied from the original in the eight instances in which it appears on this casket. The cover in the Syrian-Hellenistic group as in the Hoetenschal example in the Morgan collection, alternates as a rule the seven-pointed rosette with the single and round-petaled rosette. On the outer edge of the Morgan box is carved a folded Palmette motif, while the moulding surrounding the bacchanal is a Guilloche, which, because of its interlacing lines, would appeal, we believe, more directly to the Syrian carver than any of the other Greek ornamental motifs.

Finally, there is the Christian or Antioch group of reliquary coffers with carvings representing biblical subjects. This group is assigned to the eleventh or twelfth century at the close of the iconoclastic period when sacred subjects were again in vogue. The group contains but four complete caskets, of which three are the so-called "Adam and Eve," caskets. Especially fortunate is America and the Cleveland museum in particular in possessing one of these three — the Bethune casket.⁹

⁹ This casket, the gift of W. G. Mather, F. Prentiss, John L. Severance, and J. H. Wade, in 1924, was formerly in the collection of Monsignor Bethune of Ghent, Belgium. See *Bulletin, Cleveland Museum of Art*, Vol. 12, 1925.

The cover contains four compartment panels, the first representing the creation of Adam, the second, the creation of Eve, and the third and fourth, Cain with a rock in his uplifted hand about to slay Tobias or Abel. (Fig. 5.) The long sides have each five panels. The second panel of one of the sides represents the Temptation and the Disobedience in one scene — as Eve, prompted by the serpent coiled round a tree, plucks the apple. In the first panel she offers the apple to Adam; in the third, Adam stands alone, and in the fourth and fifth, God finds Adam sorrowing in the garden and appears to rebuke him. The opposite side represents the expulsion (in two panels) the Archangel Michael standing in the first panel. In the third panel Adam delves, and in the last, he reaps. The two end panels represent Adam and Eve in grief and at the opposite end the better of the two carvings, Eve blows the bellows while Adam forges. (Fig. 6.) The figures are carved in lower and flatter relief than would have obtained two centuries earlier. Nor are they so clearly or sharply defined. But in the facial expressions a decided change is noticeable, since the types tend to be individualized. The God-head is identified with the Christ, a convention of early Christian art, and wears a long beard and hair. Adam and Eve, as well as Cain and Abel, are distinct personalities. All the panels are inscribed and identified in Greek. The second panel of the cover, representing the creation of Eve, quaintly explains in Greek¹⁰ that "Adam having gone to sleep, Eve comes from his side." Adam is shown lying under a tree with his head in his arms and his feet crossed, while the hand of God from the sky calls Eve forth. A curious and interesting treatment here is the sacrifice of the observer's point of view toward the sleeping Adam to an agreement in composition with the other panels, all of which contain upright figures. Adam, although intended to be reclining, is actually standing. The two following panels are inscribed, "Cain murders Abel." The Garden of Eden, as indicated by only one tree, is more effective than if the panel had been filled with various other related interests.

The border, composed of the seven-pointed petal rosette and the three variants of the round-petaled rosettes, is exceptionally fine, rich and chastely carved. A Guilloche outer and inner border surrounds the cover. Of the two other Adam and Eve coffers, one is in the Museum at Darmstadt, and the other in the collection of Ernest Irroy at Rheims.

¹⁰ I am indebted to Professor Bates of Detroit City College for translating the Greek inscriptions.

A word should be said in conclusion about the origin and use of the rosette motifs found in all the ivory caskets. There is not space here to enter into a careful examination of types and examples, but we will list several instances for illustration. The rosette is found as far back as the Palaces of Ninevah and Persepolis where it occurs as a decorative motif in architecture.¹¹ They are also found in the ruined cities of Syria where Devogue first made them known in his *Syria Central*.¹² In the fifth century, A.D., the rosette passed into Europe and became popular with other Oriental motifs. It is frequently found on the closure slabs and sarcophigii at Ravenna, from the seventh to the tenth centuries. We find it employed also in figure sculpture, as instanced by two marble archangles by Nicolo Pisano, one of which has this motif as a vertical band ornament on the garment. The example may have been directly inspired by the ivory coffer. Because of the popularity of the "Byzantine" rosette, it was employed throughout the Christian East and in Western Europe, not only in sculpture and architecture, but in the minor arts and in textiles. The survival of this ornament and its various meanderings in Europe should be of interest for some one to follow in the numerous examples where it occurs.

¹¹ Bulletin, Cleveland Museum of Art, Vol. 12, 1925.

¹² O. M. Dalton: *Byzantine Art and Archeology*, Chap. XIII.

AT GIVERNY WITH CLAUDE MONET

BY RENÉ GIMPEL

Paris, France

LAST July in the space of a fortnight I twice visited Claude Monet at Giverny in Normandy. Between my first and second visit he had destroyed sixty canvases, painted for the most part between 1900 and 1920. He had spared his latest ones, however, though these were of inferior quality. With it all he had not sacrificed any chefs d'oeuvres. There were not ten works of importance left in his three studios, thanks to the great number which the dealers have purchased from him in the course of the last ten years.

Translated by Alice M. Sharkey





CLAUDE MONET: BASKET OF FRUIT
The Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C.

For six months he had not painted at all. He was not ill, but a tracheitis from which he suffered the previous winter left him with a distressing cough which had completely undermined his strength. In previous years he refused to receive visitors during the summer—although the first time I ever saw him was in the month of August. This time I went with a great friend of his, who, all the way to Giverny, kept repeating, "I don't believe he will see us."

Claude Monet's house stands on one of those rather dusty French roads. On opening a wooden door set in the stone wall surrounding it, one steps at once into his famous garden, which is composed of quite simple flowers all growing to a considerable height. There are none, I believe, less than three feet high, and certain kinds of huge marguerites seemed to me to be at least six feet tall. It is a virgin forest of brightly hued blossoms—red, not pink; vivid rather than pale blue. When one walks along the paths the flowers seem to march beside one like troops of fairies.

We rang. A servant appeared and took our cards. My friend said, "That is Claude Monet down there with the large peasant's straw hat." Quite suddenly the artist stood before us. "Gentlemen," he said, seemingly in a state of exasperation, "I never receive when I am working. Never. I am lost if I am interrupted while I am at work. You understand, gentlemen, I pursue a patch of light. It is my fault, I want to seize the intangible. It's terrible, this light which escapes one, taking color with it. Color, any color, lasts but a second; sometimes three or four minutes, rarely as long as that. What can one paint in three or four minutes? They are gone so quickly and then one must stop. How I suffer! This painting, how it makes me suffer! It tortures me! It hurts me!"

Monet terminated his monologue. I surmised that he meant to shake our hands and retreat, so I spoke to him of his old friend Mary Cassatt whom I had recently seen in the south. He was delighted to have news of her and prolonged the conversation. He is astonishing, this man of over seventy. He looks so young that one is reminded of a young father who has donned a white beard on Christmas Eve to play Santa Claus for his children. There isn't a wrinkle in his face. His color is soft, and his small round chestnut colored eyes are full of vivacity.

He led us into a studio where twenty-four canvases were hanging. I asked him if, like Renoir, he was interested in the evolution of colours

and their chemical transformation, and he explained to me that his great secret was never to use any black. One day Sargent came to work with him, but as he hadn't a tube of black to lend him the American artist couldn't paint. He considers, too, that an impasto is necessary; that Corot didn't use enough, and that when his canvases are cleaned they will suffer in consequence.

Here I took advantage of this remark to question Monet concerning Corot, and he answered, "He was the greatest landscape painter in the world. I ask myself how a Ruysdael with his black tones can have seen nature. I cannot even understand Hobbema. Hobbema sometimes understood light, witness his 'Allée' in the National Gallery. I repeat, Corot was the greatest landscape painter the world has known."

At this my friend remarked, "The good Corot, as everyone called him." Monet's face reddened and he said, "The good Corot, I don't know about that. I do know that he was anything but good to us, the Impressionists. The wretch! He barred the doors of the salons to us; he hunted us, and prevented us from exhibiting. He swore that we were malefactors, yes, actually malefactors. And in face of that, without exception, we admired him. I did not know him. I knew none of the masters of the School of 1830. The fact of the matter is they did not want to know us. One day in summer, in the suburbs of Paris, at the Robinson Ball, it suddenly began to rain. I took refuge in the big tent and someone pointed out Jean Francois Millet to me. I said to a friend, 'I admire him so much, I must speak to him.' But my friend held me back, saying, 'Don't go. Millet is a terrible man, very proud and haughty. He will insult you.' So I stayed where I was. Daumier was as inimical to us as Corot. Diaz and Daubigny were the only ones who stood up for us — particularly the latter. He was a member of a Jury which refused to admit us, and he resigned his place on it in consequence."

On the occasion of my second visit to Claude Monet I lunched with him, and it proved to be one of the best meals I have ever enjoyed. There were only four of us, but the painter who was a real gourmet, always had two chickens served, cooked in different fashions so that one could make one's choice. He had himself painted his dining room and its furnishings in a uniform shade of yellow — so marvelous and individual a shade that the simple rustic furniture was fairy-like in effect.

I questioned Claude Monet about his early life. He told me that his mother died when he was twelve years old, but that she had already

encouraged him in his drawing and had hired plaster casts for his use. "I was expelled from all the schools in Havre," he said, "for filling not only my own books with drawings, but those of my fellow pupils, which was far more serious. My father was not in favor of the artist's vocation. Life was not easy. Durand-Ruel was our guardian angel, but when he left to found his business in America there was no one left to buy our works. I went to the big dealers of the 1830 School, such as Arnold and Tripp, with some canvases under my arm. I was not admitted to the shop but left standing in the vestibule while the two partners and their staff examined my work. They laughed out loud. 'These are by Monet, the Impressionist,' they said, 'isn't he absurd?' They lifted the curtains to look at me and made fun of me to my face. Would you believe it? The dealers used to varnish our canvases with bitumen to blacken them as they considered them too light.

"Speaking of my early works, Georges Bernheim brought me the other day the two first canvases that I exhibited in the Salon. That was in 1867. It gave me pleasure to see them again. They were treated somewhat in the manner of Manet. On Varnishing Day all Manet's friends congratulated him on these two marines. He explained to each and all, that he was not exhibiting any marines. They led him to my pictures and when he saw my name with which he was not familiar, he exclaimed, 'Oh, the brute, he even imitates my signature.' Later Manet became one of my great friends.

"I was much happier when I sold my canvases for three hundred francs! Painting has made me suffer too much! All the past with which I am dissatisfied — the impossibility of always achieving good work. Each time I commence a canvas I hope to achieve a *chef d'oeuvre* — and it doesn't come off! It's terrible never to be satisfied. The people who gave me three hundred francs were sincere. One day I had to sell at that price a picture by Renoir which he had given me. I wrote explaining to him that I had needed food. He understood.

"When I lived at Ville d'Avray I owed a few hundred francs to a butcher. I knew that the bailiff was going to seize my canvases—I had about two hundred of them—so I slit them all with a knife. When I came back a few weeks later to settle up with my butcher I found that they had been sold in lots of fifty, at thirty francs a lot—that is at about 60 centimes (or twelve American cents) apiece!"

I asked Monet which painters had been his source of inspiration, and he said the School of 1830, and Delacroix. The latter is his god.

He admired Turner very much when he saw his paintings in London, but to-day he considers that Turner did not draw sufficiently in the color — that he did not give enough form to it. That is all that he learned during his English sojourn. He adores London because it is so massive, it has "uniformity," and is so simple. He does not understand the painters, who, after Constable painted the London houses brick by brick — bricks which they did not see.

That day Monet took me into an immense studio in his garden. He was working on a mysterious decoration of which I had heard. It was, as a matter of fact, a continuation of his *Nymphéas*, on canvases two or three yards long and not high enough to have imposing or important decorative significance. There must have been forty of those pictures on the floor, and they formed two vast circles. Since then he has given a certain number of these to the Rodin Museum, which have not yet been delivered because he was working on them constantly, and unfortunately spoiled them considerably. I do not know how they can be advantageously placed for they are seen at their best at floor level, and lost much of their significance the minute they were placed on the wall.

A scrupulous order reigned in the studio. About forty cardboard boxes were neatly arranged on large trestles. They contained great tubes of color all intact, and all of the same length. In a glazed earthenware jar were more than fifty very clean brushes, in a second jar about thirty, and about forty more still ranged on the benches — all two or three centimeteres in width. He has two palettes, both scrupulously clean — so well-kept that they are just like new. Only one of them had paint on it — separate mounds of cobalt, of marine blue, of violet, of vermillion, of ochre, of orange, of dark green, of another green, not light however — just a few colors, and in the centre of the palette mountains of white, snowy white. Impressionism sprang from this pile of white.

ANNA BASS

By JAN TOPASS

Paris, France

IN the type of general exhibit which partakes of the character of a show window, which is arranged as a decorative scheme, works of art are apt to take on a certain artificiality of aspect; in the promiscuity of the Salons, which is almost always detrimental, they either lose by comparison something of their intrinsic value, and their original significance, or else take on an undue importance compared to their surroundings.

To really become familiar with an artist, to observe his personality unveiled, to savor his gifts and appreciate his importance, one should visit him intimately in the place where he dreams, works and struggles with the fabric of his art. It is there he can be seen *in naturalibus*, reflected in his creations as in a thousand mirrors of the soul, and we ourselves are at our ease and can judge of his significance untroubled by the outside circumstances which unconsciously influence our response and our emotions.

Here, for instance, is the studio of Anna Bass, littered with finished and unfinished work, with sketches and with studies. On stools, in glass cases and on shelves, statues, statuettes, masks, torsos, busts, heads are ranged, heaped and pressed against one another in an adventitious disorder. It is an atmosphere of labour, of eager vision, of a delicate sensuality, of passionate reflection which seeks beauty and tries to waylay truth; which pursues the fugitive vision and vigorously reaches out after life. . . . Let us examine it more closely.

Here a sacred dancer, hieratic and voluptuous, paces her ritualistic measure adorned like an idol, the mitred head raised defiantly, the right leg bent at an obtuse angle, palms clashing. The figure is smoothly modeled without marked asperities, and light gleams over it from head to foot, shading into half tones; flowing over the trailing robe, lingering on the half uncovered breast, and emphasizing the bare foot with its supple toes turned upward like the prow of a caravel.

There is a woman's body, headless and without arms, like the mutilated statues of antiquity, inclined lightly in a gentle cadence as to the sound of invisible flutes.

In both these figures the static quality essential to true plastic art has been well conserved—the equilibrium of the masses, of the planes,

of the contour, of the forces does not in the least suffer from the movement imposed by Middle. Bass on their nude beauty.

The dance, or rather the noble and tranquil rhythm, hardly displaces the lines. Its undulating slow and peaceful movement brings into play the suave combination of the surfaces and in no way destroys the architectural stability which is a fundamental principle of sculpture.

Just once, in her "Tennis Player," Miss Bass has courageously tackled the problem of the naked body hurled violently through space, but here again she has respected the laws of her art. By simplifying the curves and concentrating in them the dynamic energy she has obtained an effect reminiscent of the famous "Discobolus." There is no brusqueness, no forced or declamatory pathos. Among all Miss Bass's work there is, to my knowledge (outside of certain masks), only one single dramatic sculpture, and this more by virtue of its subject than of its form. I refer to "Desolation" — the figure of a crouching woman, which is moreover admirably executed from the professional point of view.

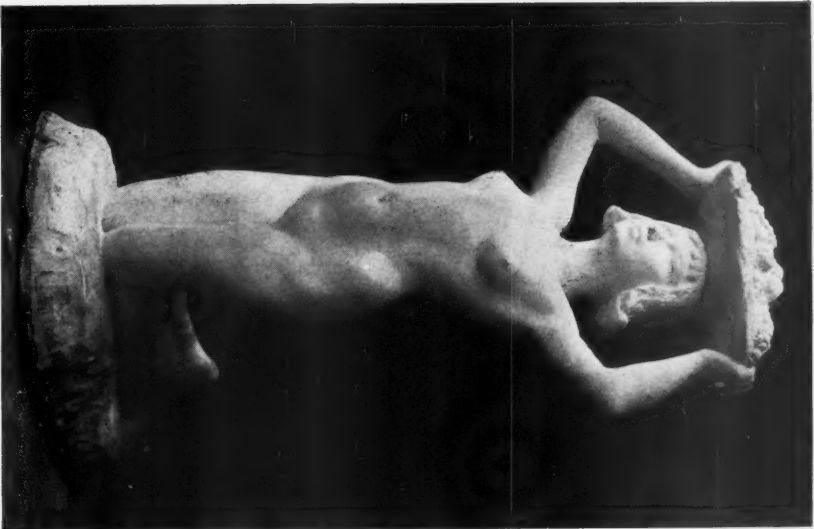
For the most part Miss Bass's sculpture is essentially lyric, peaceful, quiet and serene, touched with voluptuousness and impregnated with a smiling and indolent charm.

Stretching, reclining, kneeling, stooping, graciously supported on an elbow or an outstretched arm — these are the poses of the artist's preference. These she varies and colors, lending to each its individual life, its characteristic traits.

Anna Bass follows nature as closely as is possible or permissible, and succeeds in retaining its qualities of warmth and vibrancy. Even in her stylistic work where her preoccupation may be an arabesque, as in the statuette treated as an orchid; or that in which the skirt spreads out like the corolla of a flower; or in the *Leda and the Swan* where everything is determined by the ornamental motif — the upraised arm, the deliciously drooping shoulder, the soft bend of the leg, the organ-pipe draperies, the divine bird with his curved neck and plumes spread fanwise; — even in this stylization the artist never loses the *vis vitalis*, and as a consequence her work is never dry, factitious or indifferent.

In the women's torsos which she models so lovingly the surface seems to retain the living warmth of the skin. One senses the young energy of momentarily relaxed muscles, linked together, vibrating, interplaying.

Miss Bass has a thorough knowledge of sculptural materials and



ANNA BASS: THE OFFERING



ANNA BASS: PORTRAIT BUST. MME. B.



ANNA BASS: SILENCE



makes admirable use of them. The little secrets of her profession are hers in good measure. Her bronzes, *Repose*, *Abandon*, *The Recumbent Woman*, the adorable statuette *Ecstasy* to which she herself has given their patina with the blowpipe, with acids, or treated with gold leaf, some of them stained with green in Japanese fashion, others polished and darkly glowing; her terracottas that are so agreeable in texture (for instance the *Baby with the Shell*), her polychrome or monochrome stone statuettes, tinted and metallized; her figures in natural colors, such as *The Dawn*, ordered by the state,* which is sparkling, limpid, fresh and luminous in quality; or the radiantly young *Girl with a Basket* — all these works, big and little, are of the material which their character demands and which is best suited to them.

Anna Bass like every artist of marked personality has her favorite model — a woman with small breasts, large even somewhat heavy hips, and a delicate oblong body. Although there is a family resemblance between all her women, each one is dowered with traits which differentiate her and preserve her distinct individuality inside of the generic type. The faces, the bodies, the hands, the feet have a special expressiveness, an individual cachet.

We repeat that Miss Bass's art is realistic in just that measure which seems possible and justifiable in a creative artist making her selection, her individual choice from among the elements offered by nature — from the "dictionary" — to use the expression of Delacroix. Mitigated by the artist's creative imagination, colored by her temperament, this realism (which elsewhere has the value of conscience and aesthetic logic and serves merely as a sort of compass and metronome) emerges in its full force in her portraits. Take, for instance, the vivid portrait of Madame Rubenstein-Bloch, the art critic, whose psychology is reflected in the powerful thinker's forehead and the woman's charming and ironic smile; or the effigy of the eminent poet, Gustave Kahn, with its piercing and subtle glance; or the head of the well-known deputy, Andre Fribourg, with its cold, sharp eyes and upstanding hair — these all share in common certain characteristics — truth; a penetrating understanding, and a sense of poetry, to say nothing of the professional virtues; a sure eye that knows how to discriminate and select, and the manual dexterity to faithfully execute.

The same thing may be said of her direct, sensitive and clean-cut drypoints, and of her silvery, delicate and caressing etchings; of her

* There are works by Miss Anna Bass in the Luxembourg, Paris, and the Strasbourg Museum.

drawings in sanguine done with so light and free a touch, whose grace and spirit evoke visions of the exquisite eighteenth century.

Decidedly, Mdlle. Anna Bass, a sculptor and artist, whose originality is unmarred by eccentricity, who is modern within the bounds of moderation, and gifted with a clear and enthusiastic vision, belongs to that fine line of French artists who seek and find their individual expression while retaining an attachment for the traditions, tastes and style of their forebears.

STUDIES BY AMERICAN MASTERS AT COOPER UNION

By ELIOT CLARK

New York City

A FINISHED work of art is a mysterious revelation. It sees the public light full blown. Like a flower, one does not see the seed, the slow germination, or follow the arduous task of cultivation. The facile brush that conceals labor has been made so only by means of labor. The slow evolution in training the vision and disciplining the hand to follow it, the unsuccessful efforts, are not observed in the completed work. But as in every accomplishment, which in its finished form seems so difficult to render, we find in the training of an artist and the formation of a picture the gradual steps and mechanism by means of which the final result has been achieved.

Seldom do we see the studies of the painter and the way by which he arrived. Often all trace of his development is lost, for unfortunately time has dealt harshly with everything except perfection and every evidence of the labour that produced it has passed into oblivion.

The preparatory studies for a picture are not only interesting in themselves, but give one an insight into the germination of the idea and enable the student to observe how great things grow from little things, how the discipline of the will combines with the development of the mind and the training of the hand to bring forth the ultimate work.

It is very fortunate, therefore, that we are coming to value more highly the studies of artists, and that some of our museums are displaying these works for the interest and enlightenment both of the student and the layman.

In the museum at the Cooper Institute of New York we may see

the studies and sketches of several of our most distinguished artists, enabling one to observe their method of study and the way by means of which they arrived.

We speak of studies and sketches. Perhaps the words are used loosely. We have no exact artistic terminology. But in our meaning there is a definite distinction. In the study the artist is seeking to inform himself, to gain knowledge; in the sketch he is recording an impression or expressing hastily an idea. As far back as we have records to attest to the way we will see this dual means of the thing in the making. The study is objective, the sketch subjective; the one imitative, the other creative.

Of the work at the Cooper Union one of the most complete records of a single artist is found in the drawings and paintings by Frederic Edwin Church, presented by his son, Louis P. Church. Covering the period from 1844 to 1880, they represent the study of the active part of the painter's career. For, although Church did not die until 1900, owing to illness he produced little pictorial work during the last twenty years of his life.

Before the advent of the Impressionists and the method of painting the picture directly from nature, the earlier artists were accustomed to make their studies from nature, after which the picture, larger in size, was painted in the studio. Thus in the studies of Church we see the material from which his important paintings were made and follow him from the early drawings of New England to his adventurous trips in South America and his continental tour, recorded in drawings of Switzerland, Greece and the Holy Land.

It is interesting to note the conscientious and painstaking effort in the early drawings of trees, wherein the artist has endeavored to render with camera like fidelity their exact structure, ramifications and foliage, and how we may picture the artist as a young man fixing his attention on the object and recording part by part the intricate details. The studies for the famous picture of Niagara, now in the Corcoran Gallery at Washington, were made in 1856 and 1858, and we can observe the care with which the artist recorded the characteristic aspects of moving water, the different and varied points of view which were later to be brought together in a composite picture. If today we are governed more by a single aspect of nature, a momentary vision, our predecessors made innumerable studies of the subject before they determined what their vision was to be. Thus we find for the single pic-

ture of Niagara a group of studies in which the artist is gaining a knowledge of the subject before he attempts to paint it.

Church's most noted pictures at the time of their production were the great panoramic views of South America. His first trip there was made in 1853 and later he returned in 1857. The drawings of Chimborazo and Cotopaxi show the artist as a master of typographical line. Executed with supreme technical facility, the pencil displays with perfect accuracy the contour of mountain and the intricate forms of tropical landscape. It was from these studies that the celebrated picture, "The Heart of the Andes," now in the Metropolitan Museum, was painted. The drawings are made on buff paper, with well sharpened pencil and decisive touch, the high lights frequently rendered in white wash. The painter also made numerous studies in oil and several preliminary sketches for composition. Executed on a heavy oiled paper, the outline is first quickly drawn with pencil, over which a thin wash rendered the principal masses, and the local details were added with graphic and telling veracity. It was the age of the panorama. Church found in the Andes the embodiment of romantic grandeur and sublimity. The interest centers in the vast heights of volcanic mountains and the immensity of space, pictured under the most striking effects of sunset glow or in the rainy season encircled by the heaven halved glory of the rainbow.

In the summer of '65 we find the painter in the West Indies. The studies of tropical vegetation and trees are rendered with the accuracy and the minutiae of the botanist. Before the glamour of modernistic color, the painter sees the gray moisture laden atmosphere and the rounded forms of verdant mountains, or looking from above records the distant sea and encircling sands. The traveler would find these studies a veritable reproduction of a place.

In '68 and '69 Church made an extended trip abroad. The drawings in the Alps show him at his best. He observes the mountain structure with perfect clarity of vision, and executes it with the precision of an architectural draughtsman. Intent upon the form, he seems unmoved by its emotional significance. His sense of objectivity is unclouded. The ease and fluency of handling, the seemingly unconscious and unaffected use of the brush, mark him as a master of technical rendition. At Athens the painter made numerous studies about the Acropolis, from which we have the large picture in the Metropolitan Museum. Trained as a landscape painter, it is truly quite remarkable



FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH: CASTLE SWARTZENBERG, SWITZERLAND
Cooper Institute Museum, New York



WINSLOW HOMER: MOUNTAIN STREAM
Cooper Institute Museum, New York



to note the authoritative and distinctive style of the architectural draughtsman. It is only when he introduces the figure that Church becomes awkward and self conscious.

In Palestine we see the arid undulating hills and distant mountains or note the turrets of an eastern town. Journeying further south, the painter stopped at Petra where he made several studies of the rock hewn temple, after which he painted the impressive picture now in the possession of his son, Louis P. Church. Frequently one remarks brief color notations in pencil, which the artist used to refresh his memory at a later time.

Church seemed to require scenic landscape to inspire his brush. The spectacular effects at sunset, the heavenly architecture of cumulus clouds, the approaching storm, were for him latent with dramatic power and human appeal. The every day aspect of nature and the more familiar landscape nearer home was not sufficiently impressive to stimulate his imagination. Among his later studies are a number of views of the Hudson River from his home near Hudson, several of which are winter landscapes; but although they are splendid illustrations of the place, they lack the interest of his larger conceptions.

Thomas Moran continues the panoramic tradition. The group of some one hundred studies and sketches at the Cooper Union cover the period from 1866 to 1907. They are made in pencil and wash. The water-color studies are on gray paper with opaque pigment. Influenced by the typographical style of Church, he adds the transcendent charm of Turner. His line is not as precise as his American predecessor, but his composition is more graceful and flowing. The early drawings are among his finest achievements. In 1871 he accompanied a party of exploration in the Yellowstone, and in 1873 he joined Major Powell in his memorable discoveries in the canyon of the Colorado. To one inspired with the romantic glamour of Turner, the canyons of the west must have been as the realization of a dream. There the painter found a country as colorful as the most fanciful compositions of his favorite master, and forms seemingly imbued with a heaven aspiring ideal. Moran realizes the ethereal quality and the delicate cathedral like tracery with sympathetic understanding and mastery of execution.

The drawings of the Yosemite are dated 1872 and 1873. The gray granite walls of the Valley were not so stimulating to the artist's sense of color and the lack of distant perspective unconducive to the witchery of atmospheric gradation in which Moran excels. But his records are vividly graphic.

A group of small sketches for pictures, dated 1878, shows the inventive imagination of the artist and the formation of his compositional themes. The painter's purpose seems not merely to record the veracity of the vision but to arrange his subject in suggestive form and picturesque composition. Moran has a facile manner of picture making.

Of an entirely different nature and following a different purpose, Winslow Homer is far removed from the scenic splendor of the landscape of Church and Moran. Starting his career as an illustrator, his early drawings tell us of his observations as a graphic reporter for Harper's during the Civil War. He was not an academical draughtsman and has little of the chic and technical facility of more clever hands. He digs hard at his subject. But his observation is personal, and he records things at first hand. In his early drawings we see little of the future way the artist was to travel, and it is interesting to note how long the artist was in arriving at his ultimate theme.

The early landscapes with figures, painted in a low key, are dry, hard and colorless. But they have a human interest and show the artist's reaction to his everyday environment. It is noticeable that Homer had little appreciation of color, and this is observable throughout his entire career.

In the intermediate period are numerous studies of farm life in drawings dated in the late seventies and early eighties, motives indicating the interest of the artist in the activities of man.

From an early period Homer was fond of out door life and every year joined his brothers in fishing excursions in the Adirondacks and the Maine woods. Several of the drawings are reminiscent of these adventures and figure in later motives of the master. We also have an early record of his being at Gloucester and see his awakening interest in boats and fishing life.

It is not, however, until his advent on the Maine coast that Homer definitely discovered his final subject matter. At the Cooper Union we see several of his future pictures in the making. There is the study of the head for the "All's Well," a study for the earlier picture of the "Life Line," and a water-color drawing for the well-known picture, "The Gulf Stream," now in the Metropolitan Museum. It is interesting also to note the painter's compositional sketch for "The Herring Net," formerly in the collection of Charles W. Gould. Drawn in charcoal on gray paper, the painter has discarded line and sees his subject

in simple silhouette, indicating only the salient characteristics of the composition. The lights are effectively suggested with white chalk. Here, too, we find some of the very summary sketches of the Maine coast, revealing in a few direct washes the dramatic power of the sea.

No account of an artist's career could be more instructive than these records of search and final achievement, silent testimony of one who was ever seeking the fulfillment of his artistic purpose. Not facile in his early work or realizing his object easily, the work of Winslow Homer shows a positive determination and will which brought him ultimate mastery.

Over two hundred drawings from the note books of Robert Blum represent his study at different periods of his career from 1876 to 1896, and a number of pastels in color show his preliminary sketches for the decoration formerly in Mendelssohn Hall. He is an inveterate recorder of facts, and his notes abound in material for the illustrator. The most ordinary object prompts his observation; a chair, old shoes, slippers, studies of hands, heads, street scenes, animals. He trains his hand and his eye at the same time, and harvests facts for future use. The drawings are in pen and ink, an exacting medium. Following the manner of Fortuny, he delights in line and minutely drawn objects that give an effective opportunity for the pen point. Venice he sees in the style of Rico, and later we follow him in Japan where he is fascinated by the picturesque life of the streets and is affected also by the decorative art of the Flowery Kingdom.

In the pastels he shows that his work in black and white had not injured or dulled his color sense, and his free use of flowing mass indicates that his earlier use of line had improved his knowledge of form. The decorations for which these studies were made, unfortunately no longer on public view, are among the finest mural achievements executed in America. The sketches show suggestions of drapery, studies of the nude for structure and the draped figure for decorative effect and posture.

The student will also be interested in the splendid series of designs by Francis Lathrop and the preliminary studies for his important decorations made for the music room of C. P. Huntington and for St. Bartholomew's Church.

Walter Shirlaw is represented by several early studies made at Polling, Bavaria, in 1876. Enthused by the joy of early observation and achievement, these early studies, many of which were used for his

larger pictures of that period, remain among the most interesting examples from his pencil. In his later decorative work, for which we see several sketches, he loses that intimate and exhilarating touch with nature which vitalized his early work.

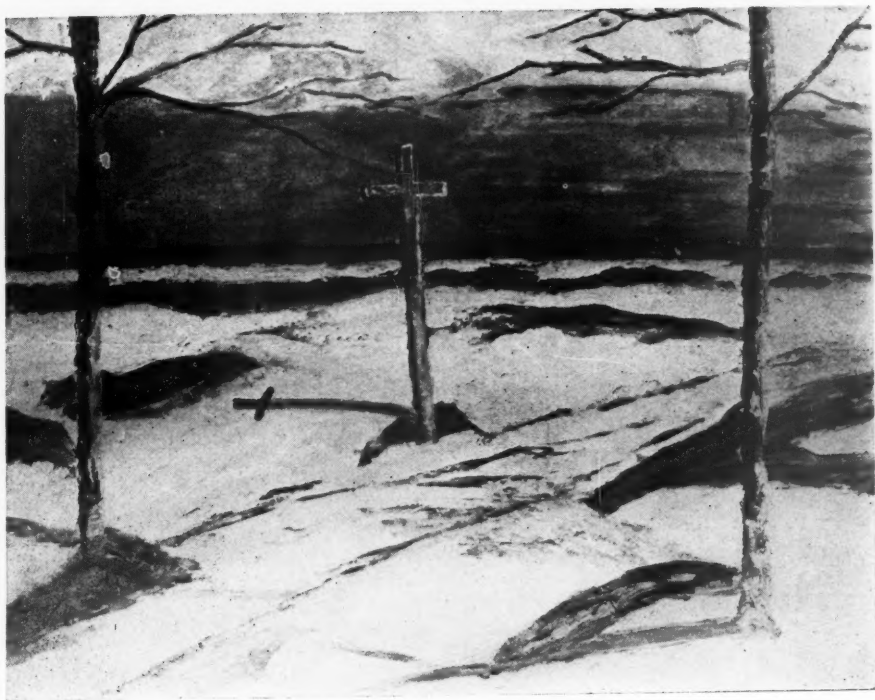
The student can find no more valuable aid in the prosecution of his work than in this valuable collection of drawings which admit one behind the scenes and show the picture in the process of construction and the method of the artist's procedure.

A NOTE ON THE PAINTINGS OF MISS DOROTHEA DREIER

DOROTHEA A. DREIER, who studied painting with Walter Shirlaw and Twachtman, developed a style of considerable individuality. Her work is characterized by freedom, directness and, in several instances, conspicuous originality. Conscious of the tendencies of the day, she has succeeded to a certain extent in incorporating in her expression that gold of Truth left after they have come through the furnace of honest criticism.

Of her larger canvasses perhaps those of the White Mountains, where she spent several summers, with their large treatment of definite sections of landscape in simple colors of exquisite charm, blues, purples and pinks, with the clouds of fleecy white and fog-like gray, are the choicest. The "interiors" done in Holland some years ago, of women weaving and doing the ordinary household chores, have a human appeal that much of the "genre" of today altogether lacks, and one or two pictures of old, weatherbeaten men and women are moving as interpretations of the hardship of life in the same way as some of the figures of Josef Israels.

Among the paintings I remember having seen which unquestionably were inspired by the Great War I know of none that moved me more deeply than the picture of *The Cross* which she exhibited in New York in 1921. The furrowed field of battle covered here and there in spots by the cleansing purity of the snow—and, in the distance, a cross, bare against a leaden sky. Very simple and with no actual item of war, a dead body or even a discarded gun anywhere to be seen, it



DOROTHEA A. DREIER: THE CROSS



somehow epitomizes the whole awful tragedy and remains indelibly stamped upon my mind, an indescribably true expression of the very depths of sorrow.

Miss Dreier was quite as successful with happy themes and lighter hues. She loved gay colors and used them with real skill in the making of some winning pictures of bright birds and sunny gardens of mountain flowers. Her series of pictures of Flamingoes, some of which have been interpreted in enamel by a friend, are really thoughtful, studied arrangements in the disposition of line and form, though the observer is often quite unconscious of the fact. She was very deft in displaying her command of the fundamentals of successful design without betraying her effort in the elaboration of a composition. Her pictures are deliberately constructed and rest upon firm foundations of artistic truth. Her small White Mountain Flower Garden is an interesting parallel in landscape of the two-subject picture so common in the religious paintings of the old masters—the flower garden in the foreground or the mountains beyond a picture by itself. Yet both are inextricably interwoven in the ambient atmosphere so that we have a convincing interpretation of a bit of rare natural beauty.

Her figure compositions are good in arrangement and decorative in effect. There are several "series" of them, of which one of the most captivating has been interpreted in enamel upon a jewel-box of carved wood. Miss Dreier's drawing of the figure is generally suggestive and expressive, rather than finished and relatively lifeless. She is intent upon catching the movement of life, the rhythm of action, and her brush seldom pauses in the pursuit of that to finish a figure, her purpose being to fix a convincing symbol of living upon her canvas.

Her broad way of applying pigment, her big way of handling the elemental features of design and her impatience of all that is precious and precise in painting mark the limits of her response to the truth that one may find buried in the fallacies of "cubism" and all the rest of the "isms" of modern painting. The vital thing in her art is, of course, that modicum of originality which is the evidence always of real genius and without which great pictures are not painted. Though not a great painter, her pictures share, many of them, in some degree, the very qualities which are a part of some of the great paintings of the present and the past. That is enough of distinction I am sure to make them worthy of the consideration of all who are interested in modern painting.

NEW ART BOOKS

OLD MASTER DRAWINGS. A Quarterly Magazine for Students and Collectors. Volume I. Illustrated. Small Quarto. London. B. T. Batsford, Ltd. 1926.

This new quarterly, inaugurated with the issue of June, 1926, admirably supplements the more elaborate annual publication of the Vasari Society, presenting in each number from fifteen to twenty admirable halftone reproductions of old master drawings, accompanied by brief notes by such well-known connoisseurs and critics as Campbell Dodgson, Baron von Hadeln, A. M. Hind, A. P. Oppé and K. T. Parker. Many of the drawings published are from private collections and therefore made accessible for the first time for study and appreciation. It should appeal to all those who find pleasure in such sketches and studies as well as the paintings of the old masters.

PAINTINGS BY JOHN TRUMBULL AT YALE UNIVERSITY. By John Hill Morgan. Illustrated. Crown 8vo. New Haven. 1926.

This volume is devoted mainly to the description and reproduction of Trumbull's series of paintings representing important moments in American Revolutionary history, with such facts concerning their inception and execution as it has been possible to discover. The research involved has been considerable, as is evidenced by the numerous footnotes and references quoted, and the work is admirable from this point of view. One cannot but regret that all of the artist's works at Yale were not included. Only a few of his fine portrait miniatures are reproduced and listed and but two of his excellent portraits in oils.

REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL ACQUISITIONS DURING THE YEAR 1924. The Victoria and Albert Museum. Illustrated. 4to. Paper covers. London. 1926.

An admirable handbook illustrating and briefly describing the more important additions to this great Museum during the year. There are forty admirable full-page halftone plates and about an equal number of cuts in the text. Works of art in many departments, periods and localities are included.

MODERN PAINTING. By Frank Jewett Mather, Jr. Illustrated 12mo. New York. Henry Holt & Co. 1926.

Dr. Mather has succeeded in constructing a really interesting and readable resume of the art of painting from the year 1664 to the present day, presenting in admirable perspective and proportion the great foreign and American masters of the brush. He generally manages to state the outstanding features of their creation and to measurably determine the importance of their work, while at the same time describing the tendencies and movements that have marked the development of painting in modern times. Everyone interested in the subject, either as student, connoisseur or collector must find this book suggestive and stimulating reading.





NINO PISANO: MADONNA AND CHILD. MARBLE STATUETTE.
The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Mich.